

THE
SPEECH

OF

THE RIGHT HON. ARTHUR,

LORD KILWARDEN,

H. Wolfe (A.) Viscount Kilwarden

LORD CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE KING'S BENCH, AND
LATELY ONE OF THE REPRESENTATIVES IN
PARLIAMENT FOR THE CITY OF DUBLIN,
AS DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF
LORDS OF IRELAND,

MONDAY, FEB. 10, 1800;

RECOMMENDED TO THE PERUSAL OF THE
CITIZENS OF DUBLIN.

Dublin

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LD. KILWARDEN'S SPEECH.

LORD KILWARDEN rose about half after two in the morning, and expressed himself nearly as follows :

I would not, at so late an hour, and after this important subject has been so fully opened, and so ably discussed by the noble Earl on the woolsack, have offered myself to the attention of your Lordships, were it not from a sense of personal consideration (may I be excused for so saying) to myself; at a time when a violent clamour has been excited, when insults are offered and threatened to the Members of both Houses of Parliament: I should be ashamed not to take an open, forward, and direct part, and not to share danger (if indeed there be any) with those who dare to serve their country: disregarding the threats, the scoffs, and calumnies of the mistaken and the wicked—without

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doing so, I could not retire to my rest with self approbation ; on such an occasion, abandoning a resolution I had adopted of declining all political interference, and conforming myself to the duties of my station, I shall treat a topic or two, and that slightly—the argument is full.

The question before us has been for many years the subject of my private and silent consideration. From the moment I first took a part in public affairs, I clearly perceived, that something was wrong in our Government. I perceived a never ceasing jarring of its parts—an incorporated Union presented itself to my consideration ; and after receiving all the information that I could acquire from the writings of those, who have, on this occasion, discussed it, of whom some have very great merit, I am entirely convinced that an incorporating Union with Britain, on terms of *equal* laws, *equal* commerce, *mutual* trade, *on equal principles*, and taxation proportioned to the abilities of both countries, is *essential* to the stability of the empire, the preservation of the religion, the independence, and the tranquillity of Ireland.

It is admitted, (no Noble Lord can deny it,) that an inseparable connexion with Great Britain

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is *indispensable* to the safety of Ireland. It is obvious, and it is enough for me to say, that were that connexion destroyed, our Protestant establishment must, in all its parts, be totally and irretrievably destroyed; and, with that establishment, our landed property must perish. If then, my Lords, the British connexion can *alone* preserve us and our property, it follows, that nothing should be omitted or delayed, that can strengthen and render that connexion *permanent*, and that every circumstance should be removed that tends to impair it; upon what then does the permanency of this connexion depend? On the unity of the Crown, supported (as it is argued) by the adjustment of 1782. What is that adjustment? and what are its tendencies toward preserving this connexion? Britain is independent, and Ireland is independent of Britain; they profess to be independent of each other with one Crown—It is such a solecism in Government, as was never heard of upon the habitable globe. Instead of being the bond of Union, it is the source of continued discord; every imperial question, every question of general commerce, and of mutual intercourse, is left open to discussion by each Parliament separately, and each may entertain and adopt clashing *opinions upon them*, and thus there
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must arise, session after session, causes of mutual jealousy and contest; and if they do not always, in the ordinary course of affairs, present themselves, yet will they be forced unceasingly on the public attention, by the ambitious, to aggrandize himself, and by the traitor, and the factious, for the purpose of effecting that very separation, which, as it is said, this adjustment was framed to prevent for ever. Has not experience fully demonstrated the truth of this observation?

The effect must have been foreseen *a priori*. No able Statesman could avoid seeing *a priori*, the effect of this state of anomalous independence; and, indeed, from the correspondence laid before the House by the learned Earl, it is plain, that the Ministry foresaw the miseries likely to ensue from this unexampled state of things. From that period to this day, every session has seen the effect produced; every session has given birth to new jealousy and bickerings between the two nations. Imperial questions of general commerce, of mutual intercourse, of regulating duties, have been continually thrown upon the Parliament, usually for purposes of ambition, and sometimes, it is to be feared, for purposes more reprehensible. Such, reason and observation tell the thinking, is the state of that connexion, upon
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which our all depends, and such our experience has too deeply made us feel it to be. If such it is, ought we not for so dreadful and deadly a malady, to take a speedy and effectual remedy? or shall we continue to linger under the disease, for the *name* of independance, which we have not, whilst it is in our power to secure the enjoyment of vigorous health, and *real* independence? If British connexion be of the essence of our existence, will you not render it, if possible, indissoluble? Will any man in his senses leave precarious, that on which alone the safety of his country, his life, his property depends, when he can render it permanent? Is it not plain, from reason and experience, that the nature of our present connexion is fraught with the seeds of disunion, with endless jealousies and heart-burning, arising from absurd attachment to a visionary independence, that in fact exists not, and, in the nature of things cannot, under such a constitution as we now have. The remedy is but one; it is an incorporated Union. The two nations can only prosper by being connected; they must form such a connection, as shall destroy the dependance of either one or the other, *in fact and in name*, that they may become one, governed by the same King, the same Parliament, the same laws, and thus extinguish for ever all grounds of destructive

destructive jealousy. Ireland, now dependent, will become independent, by becoming a constituent part of that great empire, on which it cannot be denied she is now in a great degree dependent. This measure alone can restore tranquillity to this miserable country. By this measure, the causes of our distractions will be removed—the contests for *power and superiority* from the Catholics will cease, because they will feel that such contest must be vain. The ambitious, or designing, will no longer be able to use that body as an instrument to attain their objects—the people, hitherto unremittingly pushed forward to tumult and sedition by those, who, in truth, have little attention to their real welfare, will from politics, betake themselves to habits of industry; industry, acting on the new increased commerce and wealth of the nation, will produce civilization; the condition of the lower orders will be rendered comfortable; the ambitious great, will no longer find the means of advancing their power, by exciting internal dissatisfaction. In the proposed Union, after the first effervescence shall subside, I see the return of tranquillity—tranquillity, to which this island has been a stranger for forty years—the rich will return to his enjoyment—the manufacturer to the exercise of his trade—and the peasant to industry. We shall all, at length, feel the benefit of a
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state of civil society—a state from which we are, and have long been removed. There is no man, no not the bravest amongst us, who, with truth, can say, that he has enjoyed the comforts of his house and his family in the country, without some degree of apprehension. The *necessity* of a remedy is admitted. One is offered to me—it appears infallible; yet, I will not take it, if any noble Peer will produce another as effectual—if none such can be offered, and none has been ever suggested, this must be accepted.

But it is objected, as I have heard by some of the profession of the law, that Parliament is not competent to this measure. To these, and their authority, whatever it may be, I oppose the virtuous and the learned Somers, and all those other great men, who asserted and preserved the constitution in the time of King William, our glorious deliverer; to them I oppose the act of Union with Scotland, which, if it is not constitutional, the crown of Scotland must fall from our Monarch's head.

It is objected too that the adjustment of 1782 was final. I was astonished, when I first read this position from the pen of one I have long known, loved and honoured. Final to what? to the claims of the British Parlia-

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ment to legislate for Ireland, and no further. Does the statute, or Parliamentary proceedings in either kingdom—does the private correspondence of Ministers say more? Where is this finality to be found? No where—and if it were, the thing would be absurd. A Parliament cannot make a statute unrepealable; the attempt would be ridiculous; and if it could be effected, it would give birth to a new and intolerable slavery upon posterity. It is further objected, that because of the unequal proportion of representatives from Ireland, the Imperial Parliament will oppress or do injustice to this country. This proceeds from a wrong apprehension of the state of things. It is supposed, that the representatives of the united kingdoms will still be severed, tho' in the same chamber, as if they were representatives of two several kingdoms. The truth is, it supposes that the Union will not be Union. It supposes that the fundamental conditions of the Union will be violated. The answer is, that such violation of *fundamental* articles would be the dissolution of the Union—a thing not to be conceived. It is arguing from supposed extremes—the worst of arguments. It might as well be supposed, that Britain will carry all by force. Britain in the case of Scotland, never has violated her Union—it never can be her interest to violate ours, her interest

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must be to add to the power of the empire, by increasing the wealth, the population, and the tranquillity of every part of it, and Ireland must be the peculiar object of attention. Upon a thorough view of the subject, the proposed Union, in my decided opinion, will render Ireland free and independent, will suppress faction, encrease population, and render the poor comfortable, give protection and stability to our laws, our religion, our possessions; and, unless it be adopted, all is gloomy and desperate.

Indulge me, my Lords, a few moments, one other topic; one, upon which I confess my feelings are deeply affected; one, upon which, if it were not disorderly to say so, I would address others through your Lordships. Pardon me: it is said, the trade and prosperity of Dublin, and its inhabitants, will be in a very great degree injured by the proposed Union. No doubt this is a subject highly deserving attention, and interesting to no man more than myself. In this city I have passed my life—in this city I made the first efforts of my industry; here by the fostering kindness of her citizens, I was encouraged, and by their partialities advanced, until I became whatever I now am—and they lately, very lately, unapplied to, unanimously elected me one of their

representatives. Can I then be indifferent to the interests of the City? they have not escaped my attention—they are as dear to me as my own. I am bound to her by every tie of gratitude and affection. May, then, one so devoted to her service, make a few observations on her interests in this question? If, unhappily, Dublin should somewhat suffer, which I by no means apprehend; and if it be true, that the kingdom at large, and all the inhabitants—in a word, if the nation should derive from a Union those advantages which I foresee, justice and patriotism must admit, that the whole ought not to suffer for the sake of a part, and that individuals should, in such a case, endure some loss or inconvenience for the general good, especially if that general good in the end must result to the advantage of such sufferers; but, most fortunately, Dublin would (at least I think she would) not suffer in wealth or population by the proposed Union.

I desire that my fellow-citizens will coolly and deliberately inquire, why it is they conclude this vast change will take place? and while they seek the cause, and compare the supposed effect with the cause, I entreat that the heat, which naturally enough arises from the supposed suffering, should be removed as much as possible—an heat increased by arts and interference

terference of the traitors, who, under the mask of patriotism, endeavour to raise a new rebellion, and hope to draw to their banners the faithful and loyal citizens of Dublin.—Vain will be the attempt: their fidelity to his Majesty, and the principles of our constitution are not to be shaken. From the Union how is this supposed injury to arise? but from one cause alone—the apprehended absence of the Nobility and Gentry that used to attend Parliament. The question is, if that be a cause sufficient to such an effect? It cannot be denied, that some will be absent who used to pass part of the year in Dublin, tho' by no means to the extent supposed. But, is there nothing in the Union to countervail such a loss? And, can the absence of a hundred families for four or six months of the year, materially effect a great commercial city such as ours? If the removal of Parliament shall carry away some, yet, surely, an increased commerce, and increased wealth, will more than counterbalance that loss. That the commerce and trade of Dublin will increase, I know to be the opinion of the most enlightened merchants in England, and some men of great worth, experience and knowledge in Dublin. Dublin will remain the perpetual residence of the representative of his Majesty; it will remain the seat of the courts of Justice; it will continue the metropolis

polis of the kingdom, to which, as in all other countries, the Nobility and Gentry will continue to resort; the University, devoted entirely, and in tranquillity, to literature, will draw to Dublin the lovers of science and of letters; and I donbt not, in a short time, Dublin will be seen one of the most agreeable capitals in Europe; the tranquil seat of elegance, of arts, and learning, and affording, for the entertainment of the Irish Gentry, every well conducted species of rational and elegant amusement; at the same time, that her commerce and her wealth will daily increase. Such are my hopes, founded upon my own reason, and on the best information I could obtain from wise, experienced, and dispassionate men. If there be any that doubt my sincerity and my patriotism, such, no doubt, will readily give me credit for attention to my own interest. I possess a property not far from Dublin, in which I have laid out a very high rate of purchase, in the expectation of a future rise—a considerable portion of the fruits of a laborious life, and upon which I build the hopes of my family. If Dublin decays, that estate will never rise, and my hopes will be blasted; and yet I am zealous for a Union, and fully convinced that Dublin, and all its vicinity, as soon as the measure shall be carried, and the public

public mind composed, will flourish, far indeed beyond any thing hitherto experienced.

I enter not into the detail now on your table; I am not bound to adhere to it; I will only say, that I think the principles, upon which that detail is formed, appear to me just and reasonable, reserving always however to myself the right of dissenting to any part.

I am now on the point of giving my vote on this momentous question, and I do most solemnly declare, that I think the vote I give, is for the preservation of my country, its laws and its religion, and for the *peace, happiness,* and *prosperity* of *all its inhabitants*; and were it, my Lords, *the last* word I was to utter, I would say, *Content.*

F I N I S.

